

Turn-key replica cars

A new law allows for limited-production vehicles to be sold in a completed state with both the engine and transmission installed. Previously, companies that make replicas of Cobra roadster and/or Daytona coupe, Ford GT40 and Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport (to name just a few) could only sell the individual components or, at best, a rolling chassis of these models.

The Low Volume Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Act of 2015 (H.R.2675) was sponsored by Rep. Markwayne Mulline (R-OK) and Gene Green (D-TX). Yearly production of each model must be strictly limited to 325 cars.

The bill "will allow companies to produce turn-key replicas of older vehicles that are virtually impossible to build under today's restrictive one-size-fits-all regulatory framework," said Chris Kersting, head of the Specialty Equipment Market Association. "This program will create skilled-labor jobs in the auto industry and help meet consumer demand for these classics of the past." It's a win-win, we say.



A new law might provide turn-key replica cars instead of kits, such as this replica of a 1965 Shelby Cobra.

More power for the 124 Spider?

The news that Fiat is launching a version of the Mazda MX-5 Miata in the spring resulted in cheers and tears of joy from sports car fans everywhere. They'll likely be over the moon if gossip reaching us about a planned Abarth version is correct.

But there's also speculation that the turbocharged 160-horsepower four-cylinder engine planned for the **Fiat Spider** will be increased to 200 horsepower for the Abarth. However, another equally plausible rumor has the 237-horsepower 1.7-liter four-cylinder powerplant originating from the Alfa Romeo 4C getting the nod. Since Alfa and Fiat are owned by the same company, we tend to believe the more powerful engine will ultimately win out.



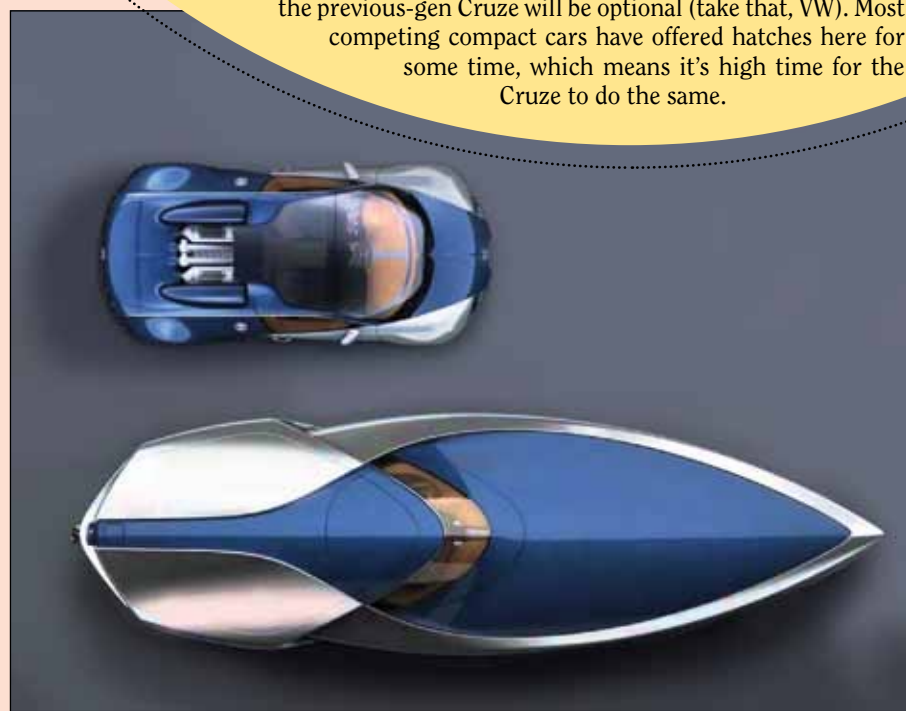
How great would it be if the new Fiat 124 — shown here at last November's Los Angeles Auto Show — wound up with the Alfa Romeo 4C's 237-horsepower engine?



Demand for hatches is hot again, and Chevy is responding with a five-door version of its popular Cruze.

Chevrolet's Cruze will gain an extra door

We report that the proverbial cat is out of the bag regarding the development of a hatchback version of the all-new **2016 Chevy Cruze**. Although the previous iteration was available elsewhere in both wagon and hatch body styles, none of them made it to North America. That will most definitely change by the fall of 2016 when it's expected that a five-door model based on the European Opel Astra (both share the same platform) goes on sale here. At the same time, a turbo-diesel engine similar to the one available in the previous-gen Cruze will be optional (take that, VW). Most competing compact cars have offered hatches here for some time, which means it's high time for the Cruze to do the same.



BIG BUCKS BOATING. If you've already gotten your order in for Bugatti's replacement for the Veyron (the Chiron, shown above), then you might want a nautical version in the Niniette. The price for both boat and car start at \$2.2 million. Each.

Bugatti goes boating

If you have a couple of million bucks to spare on the upcoming Bugatti Chiron super-duper car, you might also have the coin for a high-end boat from the company. Constructor Palmer Johnson is building what's called the **Niniette**, which was the nickname for Bugatti founder Ettore Bugatti's daughter Lidia.

Buyers can commission one of three Niniette models (42, 63 or 88 feet) to be constructed at prices starting at \$2.2 million. The mid-sized PJ63 contains two salons, room for four guests and a crew cabin, and costs \$3.52 million. The hull is a combination of lightweight high-tech materials such as titanium and carbon fiber, while the deck is Brown Bubinga, Maple or naturally blue Morta Oak wood.

Though the Niniette only hits 43 mph — about a sixth the top speed of the departing Veyron, the world's fastest production car — it's meant to be a luxury yacht. Or more precisely, according to Volkswagen subsidiary Bugatti, a sports yacht.

TEST DRIVE

2016 Hyundai Tucson

Continued from page 1

the LTD package. Secondary controls for volume and channel tuning on the steering wheel are easier and less distracting to adjust than those on the touchscreen. Desirable safety and convenience features like blind spot monitoring with rear cross traffic alert and lane change assist are standard on Limited and Sport models and unavailable elsewhere.

Offered on LTD's only is the Ultimate package (\$2,750), which bundles a smorgasbord of features like HID adaptive headlights, lane departure warning, automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection, panoramic moon roof, rear parking sensors, ventilated front seats and heated rear seats, LED map lights and electroluminescent gauges. Smart phone based apps can be accessed via Hyundai's Blue Link Telematics suite

(standard on Limited).

Base Tucson's are powered by a 2.0L, normally-aspirated four-cylinder engine. It makes 164 horsepower and 151 lb. ft. of torque. Connected to a six-speed automatic transmission, it's expected to return 23/31 (FWD) and 21/26 (AWD). All others trim levels get a 1.6L turbocharged four, rated at 175 horsepower and 195 lb. ft. of torque. EPA mileage estimates are 25/30 (FWD), 24/28 (AWD). Top mpg honors go to Eco models (26/33 (FWD), 25/31 (AWD)). Mileage-wise, Tucson's predicted numbers for AWD models are about average for the class.

Honda tops the subset of this segment that we've been referencing here, at 26/33. Once you get past the initial, momentary pause at throttle tip-in, the Hyundai's turbo four is quite lively, and the 0-60 time (high seven second range) rivals anything in its class. The 1.6 is



TEST DRIVE
this vehicle at this preferred dealership:

LIA HYUNDAI
945 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12205
518-458-2277 www.liahyundaiofalbany.com

linked to a seven-speed dual clutch automatic transmission. In manual mode, it allows quicker gear changes than most autoboxes, though it isn't as lickety-split quick from gear to gear as VW's.

Hyundai's AWD system adds \$1,400 to the bottom line, but pays dividends every winter. The on-demand system has a driver-selectable locking mode for off-road or extremely slippery conditions. Hill start assist and downhill brake control are also included. Tucson's overall ride and handling are better than average

for this segment.

The 2016 Tucson is offered in four trim levels — SE, Eco, Sport and Limited. Prices range from \$22,700 for a front-wheel-drive SE, to \$31,300 for an all-wheel-drive Limited.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for more than 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 165 calendars. Read Dan's recent reviews online anytime at Timesunion.com/vehiclereviews.